GRANT MORRISON

POP MAGIC!

POP MAGIC! is Magic! For the People. Pop Magic! is Naked Magic! Pop Magic! lifts the 7 veils and shows you the tits of the Infinite.

THINKING ABOUT IT

All you need to begin the practice of magic is concentration, imagination and the ability to laugh at yourself and learn from mistakes. Some people like to dress up as Egyptians or monks to get themselves in the mood; others wear animal masks or Barbarella costumes. The use of ritual paraphernalia functions as an aid to the imagination only.

Anything you can imagine, anything you can symbolize, can be made to produce magical changes in your environment.

FIRST STEPS ON THE PATH

Magic is easy to do. Dozens of rulebooks and instruction manuals are available in the occult or "mind, body and spirit" sections of most modern bookstores. Many of the older manuals were written during times when a powerful and vindictive Church apparatus was attempting to suppress all roads to the truth but most of them are generally so heavily coded and disguised behind arcane symbol systems that it's hardly worth the bother—except for an idea of how other people used THEIR imaginative powers to interpret non-ordinary contacts and communications.

Aleister Crowley—magic's Picasso—wrote this and I can't say it any better than he did:

> "In this book it is spoken of the sephiroth and the paths, of spirits and conjurations, of gods, spheres, and planes and many other things which may or may not exist. It is immaterial whether they exist or not. By doing certain things, certain results follow; students are most earnestly warned against attributing objective reality or philosophical validity to any of them."

This is the most important rule of all which is why it's here at the start. As you continue to learn and develop your own psychocosms and styles of magical practice, as you encounter stranger and stranger denizens of the Hellworlds and Hyperworlds, you'll come back to these words of wisdom again and again with a fresh understanding each time.

HOW TO BE A MAGICIAN

Simple. Declare yourself a magician, behave like a magician, practice magic every day.

Be honest about your progress, your successes and failures. Tripping on 500 mushrooms might loosen your astral sphincter a little but it will not generally confer upon you any of the benefits of the magic I'm discussing here. Magic is about what you bring BACK from the Shining Realms of the Uberconscious. The magician dives into the Immense Other in search of tips and hints and treasures s/he can bring home to enrich life in the solid world. And if necessary, Fake it till you make it.

Declare yourself a magician, behave like a magician, practice magic every day.

HOW TO BE A MAGICIAN 2

Read lots of books on the subject to get in the mood. Talking about magic with non-magicians is like talking to virgins about shagging. Reading about magic is like reading about sex; it will get you horny for the real thing but it won't give you nearly as much fun.

Reading will give you a feel for what's crap and what can usefully be adapted to your own style. Develop discrimination. Don't buy into cults, aliens, paranoia, or complacency. Learn whom to trust and whom to steer clear of.

HOW TO BE A MAGICIAN 3

Put down the books, stop making excuses and START.

MAGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Magical consciousness is a particular way of seeing and interacting with the real world. I experience it as what I can only describe as a "head-click," a feeling of absolute certainty accompanying a perceptual shift which gives real world transactions the numinous, uncanny feeling of dreams. Magical consciousness is a way of experiencing and participating with the local environment in a heightened, significant manner, similar to the effects of some drug trips, Salvador Dali's "Paranoiac/critical" method, near death experiences, etc. Many apparently precognitive and telepathic latencies become more active during periods of magical consciousness. This is the state in which tea leaves are read, curses are cast, goals are scored, poems are written.

Reading about magic is like reading about sex; it will get you horny for the real thing but it won't give you nearly as much fun.

Magical Consciousness can be practiced until it merges with and becomes everyday consciousness. Maintained at these levels it could interfere with your lifestyle unless you have one which supports long periods of richly associative thought.

EXPERIMENT:

As a first exercise in magical consciousness spend five minutes looking at everything around you as if ALL OF IT was trying to tell you something very important. How did that light bulb come to be here exactly? Why does the murder victim in the newspaper have the same unusual surname as your father-in-law? Why did the phone ring, just at that moment and what were you thinking when it did? What's that water stain on the wall of the building opposite? How does it make you feel?

Five minutes of focus during which everything is significant, everything is luminous and heavy with meaning, like the objects seen in dreams.

Go.

EXPERIMENT:

Next, relax, go for a walk and interpret everything you see on the way as a message from the Infinite to you. Watch for patterns in the flight of birds. Make oracular sentences from the letters on car number plates. Look at the way buildings move against the skyline. Pay attention to noises on the streets, graffiti sigils, voices cut into rapid, almost subliminal commands and pleas. Listen between the lines. Walk as far and for as long as you feel comfortable in this open state. The more aimless, the more you walk for the pleasure of pure experience, the further into magical consciousness you will be immersed.

Magical consciousness resembles states of light meditation, "hypnagogic" pre-sleep trance or alpha wave brain activity.

APPLIED MAGIC

Is about making things happen and performing the necessary experiments. In these endeavors we do not need to know HOW magic works, only that it does. We prove this by doing the work, recording the results and sharing our information with other magicians. Theoretical magic is all the mad ideas you come up with to explain what's happening to you. Applied magic is what makes them happen.

THE MAGICAL RECORD

Always keep a journal of your experiments. It's easy to forget things you've done or to miss interesting little connections and correspondences. Make a note of everything, from the intent to the fulfillment. Make a note of dates, times, moods, successes and failures.

Study YOURSELF the way a hunter studies prey. Exploit your own weaknesses to create desired changes within yourself.

BANISHING

Banishing is a way of preparing a space for ritual use. There are many elaborate banishing rituals available, ranging across the full spectrum of pomposity. Think of banishing as the installation of virus protection software. The banishing is a kind of vaccination against infection from Beyond.

Most banishings are intended to surround the magician with an impenetrable shield of will. This usually takes the form of an acknowledgment of the elemental powers at the four cardinal points of the compass. Some like to visualize themselves surrounded and protected by columns of light or by four angels. Any protective image will do—spaceships, superheroes, warrior-monks, whatever. I don't bother with any of that and usually visualize a bubble radiating outwards from my body into space all around above and below me as far as I think I'll need it.

Why the need for protection?

Remember that you may be opening some part of yourself to an influx of information from "non-ordinary," apparently "Other" sources. If you practice ceremonial magic and attempt to summon godforms or spirits things will undoubtedly happen. Your foundations will be tested. There is always the danger of obsession and madness. As magical work progresses, you will be forced into confrontation with your deepest darkest fears and desires. It's easy to become scared, paranoid and stupid. Stay fluid, cling to no one self-image and maintain your sense of humor at all times. Genuine laughter is the most effective banishing ritual available.

Banishing reminds you that no matter how many gods you talk to, no matter how many fluorescent realms you visit, you still have to come home, take a shit, be able to cook dinner, water the plants and, most importantly, talk to people without scaring them.

Study YOURSELF the way a hunter studies prey. Exploit your own weaknesses to create desired changes within yourself.

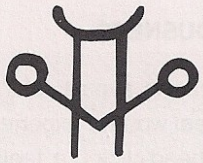
When you complete any magical work, ground yourself with a good laugh, a good meal, good shag, a run or anything else that connects you with the mundane world. Banishing after your ritual is over works as a decompression back into the normal world of bills and bus stops and job satisfaction. The magician's job is not to get lost in the Otherworld but to bring back its treasures for everyone to play with.

SIGILS

In the Pop Magic! style, the sigil (*sij-ill*) is the first and one of the most effective of all the weapons in the arsenal of any modern magician.

The sigil technique was reconceptualized and modernized by Austin Osman Spare in the early 20th century and popularized by Chaos Magicians and Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth in the 19 hundred and 80s.

A sigil is a magically charged symbol like this one:



The sigil takes a magical desire or intent—let's say "IT IS MY DESIRE TO BE A GREAT ACTOR" (you can, of course, put any desire you want in there) and folds it down, creating a highly-charged symbol. The desire is then forgotten. Only the symbol remains and can then be charged to full potency when the magician chooses.

Forgetting the desire in its verbal form can be difficult if you've started too ambitiously. There's no point charging a sigil to win the lottery if you don't buy a ticket. Start with stuff that's not too emotionally involving.

I usually sigilize to meet people I'm interested in, or for particular qualities I'll need in a given situation. I've also used sigils for healing, for locating lost objects and for mass global change. I've been using them for 20 years and they ALWAYS work.

For me, the period between launching the sigil and its manifestation as a real world event is usually 3 days, 3 weeks or 3 months depending on the variables involved.

I repeat: sigils ALWAYS work.

So. Begin your desire's transformation into pure throbbing symbol in the following fashion:

First remove the vowels and the repeating letters to leave a string of consonants—TSMYDRBGC.

Now start squashing the string down, throwing out or combining lines and playing with the letters until only an appropriately witchy-looking glyph is left. When you're satisfied it's done, you may wind up with something like this:

Most homemade sigils look a little spooky or alien—like UFO writing or witchy wall-scratchings. There are no rules as to how your sigil should look as long as it WORKS for you. RESULTS ONLY are important at this stage. If something doesn't work, try something else. The point is not to BELIEVE in magic, the point is to DO it and see how it works. This is not religion and blind faith plays no part.

Charging and launching your sigil is the fun part (it's often advisable to make up a bunch of sigils and charge them up later when you've forgotten what they originally represented).

Now, most of us find it difficult at first to maintain the precise Zen-like concentration necessary to work large-scale magic. This concentration can be learned with time and effort but in the meantime, sigils make it easy to sidestep years of training and achieve instant success. To charge your sigil you must concentrate on its shape, and hold that form in your mind as you evacuate all other thoughts.

Almost impossible, you might say, but the human body has various mechanisms for inducing brief "no-mind" states. Fasting, spinning, intense exhaustion, fear, sex, the fight-or-flight response; all will do the trick. I have charged sigils while bungee jumping, lying dying in a hospital bed, experiencing a total solar eclipse and dancing to Techno. All of these methods proved to be highly effective but for the eager beginner nothing beats the WANK TECHNIQUE.

Some non-magicians, I've noticed, convulse with nervous laughter whenever I mention the word "masturbation" (and no wonder; next to wetting the bed or shitting in your own cat's box for a laugh, it's the one thing no-one likes to admit to).

Be that as it may, magical masturbation is actually more fun and equally, more serious, than the secular hand shandy, and all it requires is this: at the moment of orgasm, you must see the image of your chosen sigil blazing before the eyes in your mind and project it outwards into the ethereal mediaspheres and logoverses where desires swarm and condense into flesh. The sigil can be written on paper, on your hand or your chest, on the forehead of a lover or wherever you think it will be most effective.

At the white-hot instant of orgasm, consciousness blinks. Into this blink, this abyssal crack in perception, a sigil can be launched.

Masturbation is only ONE of countless methods you can use to bring your mental chatter to a standstill for the split-second it takes to charge and launch a sigil. I suggest masturbation because I'm kind-hearted, because it's convenient and because it's fun for most of us.

However...one does not change the universe simply by masturbating (tell THAT to the millions of sperm fighting for their life and the future of the species in a balled up Kleenex). If that were true, every vague fantasy we had in our heads at the moment of orgasm would come true within months. Intent is what makes the difference here.

Forget the wanking for just one moment if you can and remember that the sigil is the important part of the magic being performed here. The moment of orgasm will clear your mind, that's all. There are numerous other ways to clear your mind and you can use any of them. Dancing or spinning to exhaustion is very effective. Meditation is effective but takes years to learn properly. Fear and shock are very good for charging sigils, so you could probably watch a scary movie and launch your sigil at the bit where the hero's head comes bouncing down the aluminum stepladder into his girlfriend's lap. A run around the block clutching a sigil might be enough to charge it, so why not experiment?

At the moment of orgasm, you must see the image of your chosen sigil blazing before the eyes in your mind and project it outwards into the ethereal mediaspheres and logoverses where desires swarm and condense into flesh.

Try launching your sigil while performing a Bungee jump from a bridge, perhaps, or sit naked in your local graveyard at night. Or dance until you fall over. The important thing is to find your own best method for stopping that inner chat just long enough to launch a fiercely visualized, flaming ultraviolet sigil into the gap. States of exhaustion following ANY intense arousal or deprivation are ideal.

The McDonald's Golden Arches, the Nike swoosh and the Virgin autograph are all *corporate viral sigils.*

And if you experiment and still have trouble with sigils, try some of the other beginner exercises for a while. I've met a couple of people who've told me they can't make sigils work so maybe there are a few of you out there who genuinely have problems in this particular area. Tough luck but it doesn't mean there's no magic for you to play with. I couldn't wheeze "Twinkle twinkle little star..." out of a clarinet but I can play the guitar well enough to have written hundreds of fabulous songs. If I'd stuck with the clarinet and got nowhere would that mean there is no such thing as music? Or would it indicate simply that I have an aptitude for playing the guitar which I can't seem to replicate using a clarinet? If I want to make *music* I use the instrument I'm most comfortable and accomplished with. The same is true for magical practice. Don't get uptight about it. This is not about defending a belief system, this is about producing results.

USE ONLY WHAT WORKS.

SIGILS: DISPOSAL

Some people keep their sigils, some dispose of them in an element appropriate to the magician's intent (I have burned, buried, flushed away and scattered sigils to the winds, depending on how I felt about them. Love-sigils went to water—flushed down the toilet or thrown into rivers or boiled in kettles. War-sigils were burned etc.... Some of my sigils are still around because I decided they were slow-burners and worth keeping. Some are even still in print. Do what feels right and produces results.)

Soiled paper and tissues can easily be disposed of in your mum's purse or the pocket of dad's raincoat.

VIRAL SIGILS

The viral sigil also known as the BRAND or LOGO is not of recent development (see "Christianity," "the Nazis" and any flag of any nation) but has become an inescapable global phenomenon in recent years. It's easy to see the Nazi movement as the last gasp of Imperial Age thinking; these visionary savages still thought world domination meant tramping over the "enemy" and seizing his real estate. If only they'd had the foresight to see that global domination has *nothing to do with turf* and *everything to do with media* they would have anticipated corporate stealth-violence methods and combined them with their undoubted design sense; the rejected artists who engineered the Third Reich might have created the 20th century's first global superbrand and spared the lives of many potential consumers. The McDonald's Golden Arches, the Nike swoosh and the Virgin autograph are all *corporate viral sigils*.

Corporate sigils are super-breeders. They attack unbranded imaginative space. They invade Red Square, they infest the cranky streets of Tibet, they etch themselves into hairstyles. They breed across clothing, turning people into advertising hoardings. They are a very powerful development in the history of sigil magic, which dates back to the first bison drawn on the first cave wall.

The logo or brand, like any sigil, is a condensation, a compressed, symbolic summing up of the world of desire which the corporation intends to represent. The logo is the only visible sign of the corporate intelligence seething behind it. Walt Disney died long ago but his sigil, that familiar, cartoonish signature, persists, carrying its own vast weight of meanings, associations, nostalgia and significance. People are born and grow up to become Disney executives, mouthing the jargon and the credo of a living corporate entity. Walt Disney the man is long dead and frozen (or so folk myth would have it) but Disney, the immense, invisible corporate egregore persists.

Corporate entities are worth studying and can teach the observant magician much about what we really mean when we use the word "magic." They and other ghosts like them rule our world of the early 21st century.

EXPERIMENT:

Think hard about why the Coca-Cola spirit is stronger than the Dr. Pepper spirit (what great complex of ideas, longings and deficiencies has the Coke logo succeeded in condensing into two words, two colors, taking Orwell's 1984 concept of Newspeak to its logical conclusion?). Watch the habits of the world's great corporate predators like FOX,

MICROSOFT or AOL TIME WARNER. Track their movements over time, observe their feeding habits and methods of predation, monitor their repeated behaviors and note how they react to change and novelty. Learn how to imitate them, steal their successful strategies and use them as your own. Form your own limited company or corporation. It's fairly easy to do with some paperwork and a small amount of money. Create your own brand, your own logo and see how quickly you can make it spread and interact with other corporate entities.

Build your own god and set it loose.

HYPERSIGILS

The "hypersigil" or "supersigil" develops the sigil concept beyond the static image and incorporates elements such as characterization, drama and plot. The hypersigil is a sigil extended through the fourth dimension. My own comic book series *The Invisibles* was a six-year long sigil in the form of an occult adventure story which consumed and recreated my life during the period of its composition and execution. The hypersigil is an immensely powerful and sometimes dangerous method for actually altering reality in accordance with intent. Results can be remarkable and shocking.

EXPERIMENT:

After becoming familiar with the traditional sigil method, see if you can create your own hypersigil. The hypersigil can take the form of a poem, a story, a song, a dance or any other extended artistic activity you wish to try. This is a newly developed technology so the parameters remain to be explored. It is important to become utterly absorbed in the hypersigil as it unfolds; this requires a high degree of absorption and concentration (which can lead to obsession but so what? You can always banish at the end) like most works of art. The hypersigil is a dynamic miniature model of the magician's universe, a hologram, microcosm or "voodoo doll" which can manipulated in real time to produce changes in the macrocosmic environment of "real" life.

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FROM POP MAGIC! PART 2

HOW TO CHAT UP GODS

Accept this for the moment; there are Big Ideas in the world. They were Big before we were born and they'll still be big long after we're moldering. ANGER is one of those Big Ideas and LOVE is another one. Then there's FEAR or GUILT.

So...to summon a god, one has only to concentrate on that god to the exclusion of all other thought. Let's just say you wish to summon the Big Idea COMMUNICATION in the form of the god Hermes, so that he will grant you a silver-tongue. Hermes is the Greek personification of quick wit, art and spelling and the qualities he represents were embodied by Classical artists in the symbol of an eternally swift and naked youth, fledged with tiny wings and dressed only in streamers of air. Hermes is a condensation into pictorial form—a sigil, in fact—of an easily recognizable default state of human consciousness. When our words and minds are nimble, when we conjure laughter from others, when we make poetry, we are in the real presence of Hermes. We are, in fact, possessed by the god.

I am not suggesting that there is a real or even a ghostly, Platonic Mount Olympus where Hollywood deities sit around a magic pool watching the affairs of mortals and pausing only to leap down whenever one of us "believes" in them hard enough. There may well be for all I know but it seems a complicated way to explain something quite simple. The truth is that there doesn't HAVE to be a Mount Olympus for you to encounter Hermes or something just like him using a different name. You don't even have to "believe" in Greek gods to summon any number of them. Hermes personifies a Big Idea and all you have to do is think him fervently and he'll appear so hard and so fast in your mind that you will know him instantly.

People tend to become possessed by gods arbitrarily because they do not recognize them as such; a man can be overwhelmed with anger (the Greek god Ares), we can all be "beside ourselves" with passion (Aphrodite) or grief (Hades). In life we encounter these Big Ideas every day but we no longer use the word "god" to describe them. The magician consciously evokes these states and renames them gods in order to separate them from his or her Self, in order to study them and learn.

You may wish to connect with Hermes if you're beginning a novel or giving a speech or simply want to entertain a new beau with your incredible repartee.

HOW MANY HERMES?

The form the Big Idea takes depends upon your tradition or desire. The beautiful electric youth of the Greeks is a well-known image in Western cultures, having been appropriated for everything from Golden Age *FLASH* comics to the logo of the INTERFLORA chain of florists. Other cultures personify speed, wit and illusion slightly differently but the basic complex of ideas remains the same world-wide: velocity, words, writing, magic, trickery, cleverness, are all the qualities we would associate with Hermes, but in India this Big Idea is embodied not as a tin-hatted swift runner but as a plump youth with an elephant head and a broken tusk with which he writes the ongoing story of the universe. This is Ganesh, the scribe of the Hindu pantheon.

In Egypt, the same Big Idea is called Thoth, who created the symbols on the Tarot deck. In the Icelandic tradition, Odin or Wotan is the Lord of Lightning and communications. (Like the VDUs we stare at every day, Wotan is one-eyed and on his shoulders sit the ravens Thought and Memory who bring him instantaneous data from around the world. He can be very handy in this form, if you need to discipline an unruly PC).

Hermes, Mercury, Odin, Ganesh, Thoth; all these names represent variant embodiments on themes of Communication and speed.

Reductionists may come to an understanding of magic by considering "Mount Olympus" as a metaphor for the collective Human head.

EXPERIMENT:

Pick a traditional god or demon from a book on magic or mythology and learn all you can about your chosen subject. I suggest you start with a benign deity unless you're stupid or hard and want to get into some nasty dirty psychic business, in which case pick a demon from one of the medieval grimoires and hope you're strong enough to handle the intense negative feelings "demons" embody.

However, I'd suggest starting first with Hermes, the god of Magic, in his guise as Ganesh. Ganesh is known as a smasher of obstacles and part of his complex is that he opens the way into the magical world, so it's always good to get his acquaintance first if you're serious about following a magical path.

Call fervently upon Hermes. Luxuriate in his attributes. Drink coffee or Red Bull in his name or take a line of speed, depending on your levels of drug abuse. Fill your head with speedy images of jet planes, jet cars and bullet trains. Play "Ray of Light" by Madonna and call down Hermes. Surround yourself with *FLASH* comics and call down Hermes.

Tell him how very wonderful he is in your own words, and then call him into yourself, building a bridge between your own ever-growing feelings of brilliance and the descending energies of the Big Idea.

The arrival of the god will be unmistakable: you should experience a sense of presence or even mild possession (remember what this MEANS; we are "possessed' by Venus when LOVE destroys our reason. We are all possessed by Mars when ANGER blinds us. Learn to recognize the specific feelings which the word "possession" describes. This will allow you to study your chosen Big Idea and its effects on the human nervous system at close quarters without becoming too frightened or emotionally overwhelmed.)

You may hear a distinct voice inside your head which seems to have a strange-yet-familiar quality of "Otherness" or separateness. Ask questions and make note of the replies in your head. Remember anything specific you hear and write it down no matter how strange it seems. Maintain the sense of contact, question and response for as long as you're able and see what you can learn.

Remember Hermes is a trickster also and has a love of language and games, so be prepared for clever wordplay and riddles when you contact this Big Idea. Sometimes the rapid torrent of puns and jokes can seem like a nightmare of fractal iterations but if you're going to play with Hermes, be ready to think fast and impress with your wit.

If, on the other hand, there's only a faint hint of unearthly presence or none at all, don't worry. Try again with Ganesh, Odin or a god you feel more in tune with. Keep doing the experiment until you succeed in generating the required state of mind. It's not difficult; if you can make yourself Angry or Sad or Happy just by thinking about something (and most of us can), then you are already capable of summoning gods and Big Ideas.

DEMONS ARE...

No more, no less than the way you feel inside after you've been dumped by a beloved or exposed by one's peers as a freak or any of the other negative value defaults we have

access to as human beings. Hell is ONLY the Cringe Eternal and the Place of Our Self's Undoing. When Nietzsche proclaimed "God is dead!" he forgot to add that Satan is also dead and we are Free from all that antique tat.

EXPERIMENT:

Use the techniques you've learned to summon classical gods and demons and apply them to beings you KNOW for sure can't be real, like Jack Kirby's comic book gods, H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos monsters, Pokemon characters, or Clive Barker's Cenobites. You will discover that you can evoke any of these outlandish characters to physical appearance. In place of Hermes, the messenger god, it's possible to summon the same complex in a quite different cultural drag—I advise at least one invocation of the speedy mercurial force of Hermes in the form of Metron, the computer-like intellectual explorer from Jack Kirby's *New Gods* comic books. I've had a great deal of success contacting the Kirby Gods, including a memorable encounter with the Big Idea of Righteous Anger in its aspect as "Orion" on the endless, cosmic battlefields of the Fourth World. Summon warrior strength and martial energy in the form of Orion by surrounding yourself with images from Kirby comics, by playing "Mars" from the "Planets Suite" or the Beatles "Revolution #9" or simply the sounds of gunfire and bombs from a special effects record.

Summon James Bond before a date by playing the themes to *Goldfinger* and *Thunderball* while dressing in a tuxedo.

Or try summoning Dionysus, god of creative delirium, in his Trickster aspect, as Ace Ventura, Pet Detective from the Jim Carrey films—surround yourself with your own pets or toy animals, play the movies, imitate the actor's distinctive moves and use them to formulate a physical sigil which you can enact within in your designated ritual space. Do this until you BECOME Dionysus as Ace Ventura. Record what happens to your sense of self and think of ways to use these new "godlike" qualities you have summoned into yourself (or brought forth from your "subconscious" depending on which model you choose to explain your experiences).

Think of these new qualities or gods as applications and upload them when you need to use them. The more you run the application the more convincing and intrinsic to Self it seems to become. This is why actors sometimes find it difficult to "come down" from roles and why magicians often feel possessed by gods or demons. Applications are being run.

You will soon realize that gods are "qualities" or default states of consciousness available to everyone.

With much practice you will become proficient at accessing these states in yourself. Do not, however, assume that these states are ONLY internal psychological processes. The Big Ideas have been here long before you and will be here long after you are gone. They can be regarded as immensely powerful autonomous qualities and should be respected as such. Summoning too much ANGER into your life can make you a bore and a bully, summoning too much COMMUNICATION at the expense of other qualities can make you a conversation-hogging pedant and so on.

Summon James Bond before a date by playing the themes to *Goldfinger* and *Thunderball* while dressing in a tuxedo.

There is always danger when one "god" is worshipped in favor of all others. If you summon Ace Ventura you may find yourself becoming not funny and creative but annoying. If you summon Clive Barker's fictional Cenobites just to see whether or not I'm punting absolute nonsense, be prepared to deal with powerful issues of domination, torture, submission and pain for these value states define the operational parameters of Cenobites.

HEALING

My preferred method for healing is the Spiritualist "laying on of hands" technique which involves a simple homemade prayer to the congregation of dead "healers" or "veterinarians" who inhabit the "the other side" and are said to be willing to help us in times of need. This prayer is accompanied by intense concentration and visualization of the healing process. I've always found it works very well and can be most effective in conjunction with sigils.

EXPERIMENT:

Visit your local Spiritualist Church, if you have one, and ask to see a demonstration of this powerful healing method.

DUDE, WHERE'S MY EGO?

The "ego"—in the negative sense—is that ossified sense of a stable, unchanging "self" which people use as a defense against the Fear of Change and Death. It's SELF as a suit of armor; protective and comforting at times SELF doesn't allow much room to maneuver, make effective contact or adapt to new situations. Otherwise, the Ego, with a big "E" can be a useful tool like everything else lying around here. Ego creates the heroic drive towards the Transcendence which CONSUMES AND RESOLVES that drive into a higher context.

It must be remembered that you can't go beyond your ego until you've developed one to go beyond. The ego, as Individual Self, is scaffolding for what we can call superself or the memeplex (to use Susan Blackmore's term for what we call "personality"—see *The Meme Machine* (Oxford University Press, May 2000) for more on Dr. Blackmore's revolutionary theory). Scaffolding is a necessary part of any construction project but for the last couple of hundred years we've been encouraged to mistake the scaffolding for the building. The individual sovereign self once seemed such a developmental prize that it's now very difficult to let go of it without incurring amusing existential extinction traumas, but like all other stages of growth it IS just a stage and must be surpassed.

Demoting the concept of the "individual" by deliberately engineering multiple, conferring "egos," personae, memeplexes or selves is intended, at least by me, as a method of breaking up the existential, calcified, individual "Self" into more fluid Multiple Personality constellations, by exposing "the personality" as just one behavioral option from a menu of many.

THE ABYSS

Aleister Crowley embodied the destruction of Egoic Self structures as Choronzon, the Devil 333. Choronzon, we are told, is the all-devouring guardian of "the Abyss" (The Abyss being a suitably dramatic and evocative term for an experiential "gap" in human consciousness.) The term can be applied to that state of mind during which Individual Egoic Self-consciousness begins to cannibalize itself rather than confront the usually frightening fact that Personality is not "real" in the existential sense and is simply a behavioral strategy.

Most of us have had some small experience of the gigantic boundary complex Mega-ChoronzonnoznorohC-ageM; the Choronzonic Encounter is present in the relentless, dull self-interrogation of amphetamine comedowns or fevers, near-death experiences. Think of the chattering mind, annihilating itself in unstoppable self-examination and you will hear the voice of Choronzon.

Choronzon then, is Existential Self at the last gasp, munching out its own brains, seeking nourishment and finding only the riddle of the Bottom That Is Bottomless. Choronzon is when there is nothing left but to die to nothingness. Beyond Choronzon, concepts of personality and identity cannot survive. Beyond Choronzon we are no longer our Self. The "personality" on the brink of the Abyss will do anything, say anything and find any excuse to avoid taking this disintegrating step into "non-being."

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Most of us in the increasingly popular Western Consumerist traditions tend to wait until we die before even considering Choronzon. Since we can only assume that Egoic Self-sense is devoured whole in whatever blaze of guilt or fury or self-denial or peace perfect peace our last flood of endorphins allows in the 5 minutes before brain death, the moment of death seems to me to be a particularly vulnerable one in which to also have to face Existential terror for the first time.

Better to go there early and scout out the scenery. To die before dying is one of the great Ordeals of the magical path.

The Abyss, then, is that limit of Self consciousness where meaning surrenders and reverses into its own absolute opposite and is there consumed in "Choronzonic Acid," a hypersolvent so powerful it dissolves the SelfitSelf. Here you will encounter the immense SELF/NOT SELF boundary wall on the edge of Egoic Consciousness and be obliterated against it. The Abyss is a hiatus in awareness, where notions of identity, race, being and territory are consumed in an agonizing fury of contradiction.

Magicians who have successfully "crossed" the Abyss are considered no longer human, in the sense that survival of this ordeal necessitates the breaking down of SELF into multiple personality complexes.

EXPERIMENT:

The so-called "Oath of the Abyss," is a corrosive encounter with Choronzonic forces inside the personality. It is not something to be undertaken lightly and I'd suggest many years of magical practice before attempting anything as stupid and as glamorous as destroying your carefully-established SELF. The rewards of a successful crossing of the Abyss are many but a failed attempt can leave the magician broken inside, consumed by doubt, fear and insecurity and quite useless to his or her community...

REVOLT INTO MAGIC!

Becoming a magician is in itself a revolutionary act with far-reaching consequences. Before you set out to destroy "the System," however, first remember that we made it and in our own interests. We sustain it constantly, either in agreement, with our support, or in opposition with our dissent. The opponents of the System are as much a function of the System as its defenders. The System is a ghost assembled in the minds of human beings operating within "the System." It is a virtual parent we made to look after us. We made it very big and difficult to see in its entirety and we serve it and nourish it every day. Are there ever any years when no doctors or policemen are born? Why do artists rarely want to become policemen?

For every McDonald's you blow up, "they" will build two. Instead of slapping a wad of Semtex between the Happy Meals and the plastic tray, work your way up through the ranks, take over the board of Directors and turn the company into an international laughing stock.

For every McDonald's you blow up, "they" will build two. Instead of slapping a wad of Semtex between the Happy Meals and the plastic tray, work your way up through the ranks, take over the board of Directors and turn the company into an international laughing stock. You will learn a great deal about magic on the way. Then move on to take out Disney, Nintendo, anyone you fancy. What if "The System" isn't our enemy after all? What if instead it's our *playground*? The natural environments into which we pop magicians are born? Our jungle, ocean and ice floe...to bargain with and dance around and transform, as best we can, into poetry?

What if, indeed?